THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

# MILLENNIAL STAR

ESTABLISHED IN 1840

*"Know ye that ye must lay down your weapons of war, and delight no more in the shedding of blood, and take them not again, save it be that God shall command you."* BOOK OF MORMON, MORMON 7: 4.

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## APOSTASY OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH*

ELDER MILTON BENNION.

SPEAKING from the standpoint of secular history, the fundamental concepts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are Hebrew in their origin. Jesus often appealed to Moses, and the later Hebrew authorities, in support of His own religious teachings. His references to God, His Father, were after the manner of the Hebrew prophets; His summary of the fundamentals of religion, in terms of man's relationship to God, and to his fellow men, was practically identical with that given by a young Jewish lawyer, discussion of which brought forth the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Jesus declared Himself to be in the image of the Father, and this declaration is reiterated by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The religion of Jesus was founded upon simple faith in a personal God, who, in a unique way, was declared to be the Father of Jesus Christ, but who was also the spiritual Father of all mankind. All men were, therefore, to be regarded as brothers. Thus the foundation principles or basic faith of the Gospel was made comprehensible to the masses of mankind, for whom it was intended as a guide to right-living and to salvation in the world beyond. The ordinances of the Gospel were relatively few and simple, and symbolic of the sacrifices Jesus made for the salvation of mankind.

The disciples of Jesus accepted this simple, impressive faith in God, the Father of all, in Jesus Christ, His Only Begotten Son

*Address delivered from Radio Station K S L, Salt Lake City, Utah, May 15th, 1927.

and special Messenger in His plan of religious fellowship, and in the high type of moral living and consecration to service set forth in the teachings of Jesus. They accepted the simple ordinances provided in the Gospels as a pledge of faith and continued devotion to the cause. This was the status of the Church in the first century of the Christian Era.

### OUTSIDE INFLUENCES

By the end of this century, however, the Church had come to be more under Greek and Roman than under Hebrew influence. With the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews the Christian Church became more and more an institution of the Gentiles and under the leadership of men schooled in Greek philosophy, but unschooled, relatively speaking, in the basic concepts of the Hebrew religion. These new leaders of the Church steadily ingrafted, as doctrines of the Church, more and more from Greek philosophy, as a substitute for the simple yet powerful and effective teachings of Jesus. This situation is well expressed by the German professor, Alfred Weber. In his *History of Philosophy*, he says:

> The breath of expiring Hellenism passed into Christianity. The doctrines of Plato and his latest interpreters continued to influence the ablest thinkers among the followers of the Gospel, and the philosophy of the Church during the entire middle ages merely reechoes the teachings of the great Athenian philosopher.

Jesus had founded His Church upon the principle of immediate, continuous, divine guidance, manifest through revelation and other gifts of the Holy Ghost. The historical records, however, show that in the later centuries the church leaders substituted for this divine guidance the philosophies of their learned leaders, who, at various times and places, appealed to the Neo-Platonic philosophy, which they had earlier vigorously combated; and, at other times, to Aristotle, whose philosophy and science was ultimately adopted by the Church. Aristotle's works thus came to be one of the great sources of authority in the Medieval Church.

### CONDITION FORESEEN

The influence of Neo-Platonism is very marked in the development of asceticism, and in some degrees of monasticism. The deprecation of the body and the bodily life, while manifested in some measure in the writings of St. Paul, was very greatly developed, and practised in extreme form, through the influence of Neo-Platonism and other Greek and Oriental cults. This teaching of extreme asceticism was predicted and denounced by St. Paul as the work of false teachers who should later arise "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

The influence of Aristotle is even more marked in the development of church doctrine and in determining the policies of the Church. For instance, Aristotle, in his *Metaphysics*, discusses the nature of God and His relation to the world. Aristotle says:

Pure self-activity of reason is God's most blessed and everlasting life.

After elaborating this thought he continues thus:

That there is then a substance which is eternal and immovable and separate from the objects of sense is evident from what has been said. And it has also been shown that this substance cannot have extension, but is without parts and indivisible. For it imparts motion through endless time, and nothing limited has unlimited potentiality. Now since every magnitude is either limited or unlimited, for the reason given God cannot have limited magnitude, nor yet can he have unlimited magnitude, because, in a word, there is no such magnitude.

And further that God is free from passion and from qualitative change has also been shown, for all other changes are subsequent to motion in space. Why these things are so is now clear.

## OBVIOUS EFFECTS OF ARISTOTLE'S DOCTRINE

Comparison of this citation from Aristotle with the ideas and phrasing of the creeds developed in the councils of the Church in the fourth century and later, makes clear the source from which some parts of the creeds were derived.

This particular example of the influence of Greek thought upon medieval Christian theology may be regarded as typical of how the Hebrew religious concepts of the Gospel, as taught by Jesus, gave place to a very different type of thought.

A further consequence of the alliance of the Church with the philosophy of Aristotle was the so-called warfare between science and theology that prevailed in the later middle ages and the beginning of modern times. The philosophy of Aristotle included the whole body of ancient science. This ancient science became part of the doctrine of the Church. The development of science was long delayed because students appealed to Aristotle as a final authority, as they did to the Bible and the church fathers in matters more distinctly theological. When scholars did break away from this practice and set about direct investigation of Nature, thereby making some discoveries in conflict with Aristotle and ancient scientific conceptions, these innovators were often denounced as heretics, sometimes threatened with death, and their writings committed to the flames. All this, of course, with the worthy motive of saving these and other possible heretics from future damnation. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" seems to have had little application here, unless it be assumed that all scientific truth was revealed, once for all, to Aristotle. This is, of course, quite contrary to the spirit and method of Aristotle himself.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament, is a plan of practical living based upon faith in God, the Father, in the brotherhood of all mankind, and in the possible salvation of all who would conform to the plan; it does not adopt any particular cosmological system, nor does it espouse any theory of natural science as against any other. The practice of Jesus and His Apostles, in this respect, might well be stated in words derived from His remark concerning His relation to the civil authority: Render unto science the things that belong to science and unto God the things that belong to God. Man's salvation does not depend upon whether he believes in the Ptolemaic or the Copernican astronomy, nor upon the truth or the falsity of either of these scientific theories. Had the Church left science to fight its own battles it would have been infinitely better both for the Church and for science. This so-called warfare was in fact a warfare between the old science and the new, in which the Church, unfortunately, found itself allied with the old, and in opposition to free investigation. In this we have a radical departure from the example of Jesus, who taught the truth as God the Father revealed it to Him, and as it concerned man's relationship to and duties toward God and fellow men. The results of men's efforts to observe Nature and to interpret these observations did not enter into the controversies recorded in the Gospels.

### RELATIONSHIP OF CHURCH AND STATE

Another point of contrast between the Primitive and the Medieval Church is in their relation to the State. The remark of Jesus "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's" is generally regarded as giving sanction to separation of Church and State. For the sake of religion itself this seems to be highly desirable. Political government is based upon force; the laws of the State are enforced by civil or military power. This use of force, which is essential to the preservation of the State, is quite in contrast with the attitude and functions of the Church. The Church is a voluntary organization. Membership and compliance with the laws, principles, or rules of the Church, are all on a voluntary basis, except that fellowship or membership in the Church may, under some conditions, be denied an individual.

None of these things are true of the State. No one can choose whether or not he will be a member of the State, although, under some circumstances, he may transfer his citizenship from one State to another. He cannot, however, escape being a citizen or a subject of some State. He cannot sever his connection with the State at will, nor can he choose whether or not he will obey the laws without, in case of disobedience, assuming the risk of physical penalties imposed by the State.

The two institutions, Church and State, are, therefore, very different in their nature and functions. Each has a very important place in human society, but each has its own place and should not seek to trespass upon the other. In this respect the Medieval Church was in grave error.

Church officials are also, or may be, citizens with all the rights of other citizens. Even as church officials they may advise their fellow-citizen church members as to their duties in all matters that concern the religious life. They may even do more than merely to pray for the civil authorities. They have no right, however, as church officials, to resort to the methods of compulsion characteristic of the civil government.

In family government minors may be subject both to persuasive and compulsory methods. In adult society at large, however, these two methods are, in general, divided between the Church and the State. The State may, of course, in its educative functions, also use persuasive methods; the Church, however, may not properly use compulsion. Its methods are those of enlightenment, faith, love, kindness, even rebuke, if need be, but never compulsion. The Medieval Church fell far short of conformity to these standards; in fact, it often assumed civil authority and exercised compulsory methods in dealing both with States and with individuals.

### NULLIFICATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

The foregoing remarks pertain to generally accepted facts of history, and are in themselves sufficient to show how the Christian Church in medieval times and even earlier had departed from the fundamental teachings of Jesus. It is not our intention here to enter into theological controversies, nor to discuss the present status of Christian Churches. In no case should our differences of theological doctrine be the occasion of intolerance or of ill will. That there are such differences, however, cannot be ignored. The Latter-day Saints hold that, concurrent with the changes of doctrine and policies we have here related, there were also changes in the forms and functions of the church government, involving loss of the divine authority of the Priesthood conferred by Jesus upon His immediate disciples. Irrespective of the question of succession in the offices of the Priesthood, the Latter-day Saints maintain that abuse of divine authority is in itself sufficient reason for its nullification, and when nullified it cannot, of course, be transmitted; it can only be restored by divine intervention.

The Church itself nullifies the Priesthood or divine authority conferred upon its individual members whenever the conduct of these individuals warrants disfellowship. May not God, then, nullify the Priesthood of all, when the Church itself has apostatized? This apostasy may come about by radical change of

doctrine without divine authorization, or by departure from gospel standards of living.

The Latter-day Saints likewise hold that the ordinances of the Gospel as taught by Jesus were radically changed, and, in some instances, perverted into unwarranted usage. Out of these perversions grew the doctrine of infant damnation, vigorously denounced by the Prophet Moroni in the closing chapters of the Book of Mormon, and published about one hundred years ago, while this doctrine was still widely accepted. Also grew the idea that the murderer may by confession and repentance at the last moment pass from the scaffold to salvation in the kingdom of Christ, while the well-behaved pagan is forever lost.

These doctrines, to be sure, are not now generally promulgated. They are, nevertheless, a heritage from the Medieval Church and in large measure, at least, the result of perversions of the teachings of Jesus, which teachings guarantee the possibility of salvation for all mankind who do not by their own acts forfeit this privilege.

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## IS THE HOUR A GAIN?

Elder Ralph V. Chisholm
Assistant Secretary of the European Missions

Since midnight on the 9th of April last, Great Britain has been working and playing under what is known as "British Summer Time"; but on October 2nd, at 3:00 a.m., the clocks of the country were turned back one hour, and that which was lost six months ago was again found.

England has, in a sense, gained one hour, composed of sixty golden minutes, which are in turn made up of sixty seconds; and now the question is: To what use shall we devote the hour gained?

We speak of time, but time is only relative, and is nothing more than a means whereby we gauge our existence here on earth; time is nothing except as we use it; time is unending, but you and I have only a limited amount. For convenience it is divided up into units, and we speak of hours, days, weeks, months and years. We have no days to waste, for we need every one of them with which to build our lives. The teaching of Athenodorus, a philosopher of the first century, to the effect that "one must be able to give an account of one's time, and prove one's old age by the amount of what one has done for the world, and not simply by the length of time one has lived", is very firmly believed by all true Latter-day Saints; and their lives of industry and ceaseless activity bear witness to the world that idleness has no place among them.

Idleness is one of the many curses under which the world labours; and the criminal court records of any country will bear out the statement that many brilliant minds have been largely influenced toward the perpetration of crimes and murders by this cause. The Indian tribes of the American Continent are living witnesses to this effect. Coming, as they did, from Israelitish stock, they were "a white and delightsome people", but through transgression and sin, of which idleness was the advance agent, they have brought upon themselves a curse. The Prophet Nephi was permitted to behold in vision the future of his brethren, the Lamanites; and concerning them he said:

And it came to pass that I beheld, after they had dwindled in unbelief they became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations.—1 Nephi 12: 23.

Aside from the universal denunciation of evil thoughts and deeds to which unemployed minds and hands are so readily susceptible, the Lord has firmly declared:

Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer.—Doctrine and Covenants 42: 42.

The Latter-day Saints have been charged with the supreme responsibility of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to mankind, and with so few to do the work, when compared with the millions to whom we are sent, and with so short a time remaining for the promulgation of the Gospel, the hour gained by the turning back of the clocks of this land, as well as every other hour not fully occupied, should be conscientiously devoted to the completion of this great latter-day work, and the warning of every human soul. We cannot afford to sit down with folded hands, feeling safe from the judgments that are to come, for the Lord speaks thus:

When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.—Ezekiel 3: 18.

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GRANTED that men may and do create among themselves societies, associations, sects, and even "churches", if they choose so to designate their religious organizations; granted that they may prescribe rules, formulate laws, and devise plans of operation, discipline, and government and that all such laws, rules, and schemes of administration are binding upon those who assume membership—granted all these rights and powers—whence can such human institutions derive the authority of the Holy Priesthood, without which there can be no Church of Christ?—J. E. T.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1927

## EDITORIAL

### AN ANCIENT SERMON

MANKIND TO-DAY presents a spectacle of unprecedented activity, progression and achievement in material things, coupled with apathy on the part of some, and acrimonious dissension among many, respecting matters religious and spiritual. Worldly affairs engross the attention of men, and few there are who hear, above the rattle and roar of earthly turmoil, the voice of warning and commandment calling the race to repentance, while yet there is time.

Stop! Look! Listen!

True, there are churches and so-called religious societies innumbered; and of these many are of worthy motive and commendable service. Never before has organized benevolence been practised on so broad a scale nor with greater efficiency; and none who thus serve the interests of their needy fellows shall fail of reward. Good deeds shall not go unnoticed because they were wrought without the auspices of sect or church. Nevertheless, more is required for salvation than charity or benevolence, more than even a conscientious observance of the moral code alone.

Salvation of the soul is conditioned upon compliance with the laws and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, within which charity, benevolence and personal morality are included. The fundamental principles and ordinances are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Redeemer of mankind; second, Genuine and whole-souled repentance; third, Baptism by immersion in water by authority of the Holy Priesthood; fourth, Reception of the Holy Ghost by the authorized laying on of hands.

Many are the doctrines, dogmas, precepts and theories of men, whereby salvation is promised on other terms; and theological systems, evolved from human learning, are substituted for the plain and simple means prescribed by the Christ. Man's unwisdom denies the existence of a living, personal God, and flouts the personality of Satan, the arch-deceiver.

Here follows part of a forceful sermon, preached by a Hebrew prophet nearly six centuries before Christ was born. It relates to this current time:

For it shall come to pass in that day that the churches which are built

up, and not unto the Lord, when the one shall say unto the other: Behold, I, I am the Lord's; and the others shall say: I, I am the Lord's; and thus shall every one say that hath built up churches, and not unto the Lord—

And they shall contend one with another; and their priests shall contend one with another, and they shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance.

And they deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel; and they say unto the people: Hearken unto us, and hear ye our precept; for behold there is no God today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and he hath given his power unto men;

Behold, hearken ye unto my precept; if they shall say there is a miracle wrought by the hand of the Lord, believe it not; for this day he is not a God of miracles; he hath done his work.

. . . .

And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God.

. . . .

O the wise, and the learned, and the rich, that are puffed up in the pride of their hearts, and all those who preach false doctrines, and all those who commit whoredoms, and pervert the right way of the Lord, wo, wo, wo be unto them, saith the Lord God Almighty, for they shall be thrust down to hell!

. . . .

For the kingdom of the devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance, or the devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains, and they be stirred up to anger, and perish;

For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance.

. . . .

Yea, wo be unto him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost!

. . . .

Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost.—Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 28.

J. E. T.

## A VISIT TO FRENCH MISSION RELIEF SOCIETIES

A SUCCESSFUL VISIT was recently made by Sister May Booth Talmage, President of the Relief Societies in the European Missions, in company with President and Sister Ernest C. Rossiter, to the Relief Societies within the French Mission. A spirit of earnest devotion and progress was everywhere found to exist in a marked degree. The members at each conference extended such warmth of welcome and generous hospitality as are understood by the recipients, even though the language be unknown. Not by members only were the visits appreciated, but also by the splendid corps of missionaries, always on hand to extend helpful courtesy. One has to really feel the spirit of such occasions to gain an adequate conception of the joy and uplift they bring to all participants.

After a brief stay in Paris, where Sister Talmage was met by President and Sister Rossiter on August 20th, the party of three proceeded to Liege, Belgium. From this city visits are easily made to the surrounding branches. The first Relief Society conference was held in Herstal, on August 24th. Here the little hall was well filled with people eager to listen to the messages given. The history, aims and achievements of the organization, methods of increasing membership, commendation for past efforts and instructions concerning present activities were the themes treated by Sisters Talmage and Rossiter, President Rossiter and District President Joel H. Bowen.

The second conference was held in Seraing on August 25th, with Elder Easton C. Woolley in charge. Sister Talmage forcefully impressed the importance of individual effort as affecting the success of the organization as a whole. President and Sister Rossiter and District President Bowen gave specific and helpful details for bettering the work.

On Saturday, August 26th, conference convened at Liege. The visiting President of Relief Societies told of blessings derived from rendering service, and of the necessity of working in unity. President and Sister Rossiter also gave inspirational talks.

On Sunday the party divided, President Rossiter going to Brussels, Sisters Talmage and Rossiter to Seraing and Herstal, respectively, to address gatherings there. A meeting of Relief Society officers of the entire District was held at Liege in the late afternoon. Here problems of the organizations were discussed and valuable instructions given. That evening a District conference of the Mutual Improvement Associations also convened in Liege, to which one hundred and twenty-nine representatives gathered. Sister Talmage occupied the time, effectively setting forth the scope of M. I. A. work, and the great benefits derived from its varied activities by the young people of the Church.

She urged all to avail themselves of the opportunities offered for development.

In Brussels on August 28th Sisters Talmage and Rossiter addressed members of the Church in a Bible class; and a small fund was started to encourage the organization of a Relief Society in that branch. Journeying from Brussels to Dresden, a few hours were spent with President Leon B. Linford and his associates, at Cologne.

At the conclusion of the Mission Presidents' Conference, which convened in Dresden on September 4th, Sister Talmage returned with President and Sister Rossiter to complete her visit in the French Mission. Pressing duties necessitated President Rossiter's return direct to Geneva. After a few pleasant hours at the Mission Home in Basel, Switzerland, on September 14th the sisters reached Besancon, France, where District President Stewart Wright was in charge. The Relief Society here was organized in January, 1927, with but five members, so it was gratifying to find the hall crowded, with extra chairs provided to accommodate the large congregation. Forty-seven investigators were present, among whom were two professors and the director of a local college. Authenticated facts, telling of the cooperation of the Relief Societies with the Allied Governments during the Great War, and of relief work being carried on throughout the civilized world, impressed many listeners with the magnitude of the work accomplished by the "Mormon" women, and with the benefits of membership in such an organization. Several applications to join the Society were received.

The following evening, a meeting was held at La Chaux du Fonds, a progressive watch-making centre in the Swiss Alps. Here a good musical program was rendered. The addresses given stressed the thought of individual responsibility of members and of the great opportunity for missionary service afforded by this organization. President Leonard Robbins and Elder John S. Ness outlined methods for increasing membership.

A spirited meeting was held at Neuchâtel on September 16th, where the sisters were again joined by President Rossiter, and all addressed the gathering. Also, an excellent program was given by the local members, in which marked appreciation was shown the visitors. Elders George Y. Jarvis and Halvor Berrett are directing the work in Neuchâtel. September 17th found the travelers at Lausanne, holding another conference in a beautifully decorated hall, with Elder Parker Pratt Warner in charge. An elaborately prepared chart depicted vividly the varying conditions of the Relief Society in this branch, the status shown at present being highly commendable. Interesting and helpful addresses were given on each of these occasions.

"Mutual Improvement" was the theme treated by Brother Harold Goff, Editor of the *Deseret News*, who was traveling as the

guest of the Carnegie Endowment Fund for International Peace, and by Sister Talmage, at the sacrament services in Geneva on Sunday, September 18th. A Relief Society conference of the Geneva Branch was held on the following evening. Special commendation for unusual progress made during 1926-27 was offered by Sister Talmage, who, with President and Sister Rossiter, also gave illuminating facts concerning Relief Society achievements. This gathering was featured by the dramatization of the Parable of the Ten Virgins by members of the Society. The number and excellence of the musical renditions were also outstanding.

The final conference convened on September 20th in Lyons, France, where the first Relief Society of the French Mission was organized. The meeting was held here in the home of Sister Barthomeuf, where the same splendid spirit prevailed and the same uplifting and encouraging addresses were given as at all the previous sessions.

On the occasion of each conference, gifts of flowers and other tokens of appreciation were presented by the members to the two visiting Presidents of Relief Societies; sincere gratitude for the encouragement and uplift accorded by their presence was everywhere expressed. Sister Talmage's visit has been a memorable one for the French Mission. Her influence for good has left a lasting impression, and much benefit by way of increased endeavour and enthusiasm is anticipated as a result of her brief stay among us.

VENUS R. ROSSITER,
President of the French Mission Relief Societies

Geneva, Switzerland, October 6th, 1927.

## THE BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' CHAPEL at Birmingham was the scene of the fall conference of the District on Sunday, October 9th. Elder Seth W. Pixton and Sister May Booth Talmage traveled from Mission headquarters in Liverpool to be present. President Heber J. Matkin, the ten Traveling Elders of the Birmingham District, and a goodly number of members and earnest inquirers were also in attendance.

The theme "Joseph Smith the Prophet" was effectively developed in the opening session through discourses, recitations and songs given by the young people of the District. That God spoke to worthy men of old for the guidance of His children on earth, that apostasy and latter-day restoration were foreshadowed by prophets of former days, that Joseph Smith was divinely commissioned to bring forth the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this day, and that results, derived from putting into practice laws and precepts restored through the Prophet, bear witness of his divine calling, were among the truths brought out by John J. W. Ward,

Edgar A. Cater, Dora Green, Muriel Hunter, Edna Lewis, Alvin W. Joseph, Edna Makin, Walter Edwards, Evelyn Morgan, Doris Collins, Madge Horne, Lorenzo Dunn, Charles C. Edwards, George Grundy and Charles Collins, participants in the morning meeting. Elder Seth W. Pixton conveyed greetings from President James E. Talmage, and enlarged upon the theme, stating that after a hundred years of opposition and attempts to discredit the story of Joseph Smith, it remains unshaken before the world in its simplicity and truth, and that men have not been able to support claims made against the Gospel, which the Prophet was instrumental in restoring.

The second session of the conference convened at 2:30 p.m. District President Heber J. Matkin, speaking first, reported the following facts concerning the activities and condition of the District during the past six months: In the Birmingham District reside 646 members of the Church; branches are organized at Kidderminster, Northampton, Nuneaton, Sparkbrook and Wolverhampton. The missionaries have expended their efforts earnestly and humbly, devoting 4,761 hours to tracting and 994 hours to visiting investigators, distributing 64,493 tracts, 8,097 books and pamphlets, and 146 copies of the Book of Mormon. They have held 130 street meetings, and have engaged in 8,290 gospel conversations. Seven baptisms have been performed. President Matkin spoke further, setting forth the Mutual Improvement slogan for 1926-27, and telling of the benefits and blessings that come with "a fuller knowledge of the Book of Mormon and a testimony of its divine origin."

Following the customary presentation of the General Authorities of the Church, and Mission officers, Elder Merrill Sandberg cited prophecies uttered by the Prophet Joseph Smith which subsequently were fulfilled, stressing in particular the forecasting of the Saints' removal to the Rocky Mountains. Elder Rulon F. Thompson declared that this Gospel contains the plan of salvation not only for the living, but also for the dead. Elder Lavon E. Payne testified that this latter-day work is indeed the work of God, and that the scriptures bear witness of it. The importance of the preexistence in the spirit-world, as it affects our lives and actions here, and the foreordination of prophets, including the latter-day Prophet, was stressed by Elder Laurence Peterson. Revelation from God to man is received to-day, just as in ancient times, testified Elder Kenneth H. Smith. The Holy Priesthood gives the authority to act in the name of God, and no man can take this power unto himself, asserted Elder R. LeRoy Fletcher. Elder John P. Hopkinson pointed out that the Godhead consists of three distinct Personages, who are one in purpose, as the scriptures testify.

As first speaker in the evening session of the conference, Elder Grant W. Wilde explained that individual apostasy is invariably

caused by transgression, and is evidenced by criticism of those in authority and lack of charity for fellow-workers. Elder Alva L. Ritchie declared that God hears and answers prayers, and that men should pray in times of prosperity as well as in times of adversity. The weak things of the world are often used to confound the wise, and the wisdom of man is as foolishness with God, were the truths set forth by Elder Ezra M. Parry.

Sister Talmage stressed the reality of the vision of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith, and its message of great import to all the world. She recounted the unusual and bitter conduct of ministers and others toward the fourteen-year old boy, in spite of which the Prophet remained true to his testimony, knowing that he had seen the heavenly Personages, and neither daring nor desiring to deny it. May our lives be a testimony to all mankind of the divinity of this work, was her closing appeal. Contained within the Book of Mormon, and within the circumstances surrounding its coming forth, is conclusive evidence that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, declared Elder Pixton in his closing remarks, and further, in the consistency of the Prophet's story, coupled with subsequent events in his life, and in the lives of the special witnesses of the sacred record, is sufficient proof to the honest inquirer that the book is what it purports to be, that Joseph Smith did receive the plates from an angel of God and that he translated the record, not by human wisdom, but by the gift and power of God. These things and many others mark him as a true prophet, whose message is of summoning importance in the world to-day.

Inspirational music added to the uplifting spirit, manifest throughout the day. A missionary meeting and a Union meeting were held Saturday. Priesthood, Relief Society, and M. I. A. meetings were held between general sessions on Sunday. Of the conference proceedings favourable mention was made in the *Birmingham Gazette*.

MERRILL SANDBERG, District Clerk

## FROM THE MISSION FIELD

**Releases and Departures:** Elder James B. Collyer, of the Leeds and Birmingham Districts, and Elder Boyd W. Madsen, of the Birmingham and Ulster Districts, have been honourably released and sailed for their homes in America aboard the *Leviathan* from Cherbourg, France, on October 11th.

**Arrivals and Assignments:** The following missionaries arrived in Liverpool on October 15th, aboard the *Montclare*; they have been thus assigned:

For the British Mission—Frank S. Cragun, Provo, Utah, to the Bristol District; Stanley W. Layton, Layton, Utah, to the Liverpool District; Charles J. Parkinson, Morgan, Utah, to the Newcastle District.

For the French Mission—Carl Joseph Harris, Provo, Utah.

For the German-Austrian Mission—Alexander Sloan Nibley, Glendale, California; Clarence Russell Poulton, Salt Lake City, Utah.

For the Netherlands Mission—Ralph M. Davey, Salt Lake City, Utah.

For the Swiss-German Mission—John Harold Aird, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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**Branch Conferences:** Of the Lancaster Branch, Liverpool District, on October 2nd. Gospel discourses were given by District President David M. Kennedy and Elder William Fred Forsey. Good accounts of the conference appeared in the *Lancaster Observer* and the *Lancaster Guardian*.

Of the Mansfield Branch, Nottingham District, on October 2nd. "The Free Agency and Accountability of Man" was the theme treated. District President Waldo L. Osmond and Elders Lyman T. Neilsen and David W. Sutton gave addresses.

Of the Nottingham Branch, Nottingham District, on October 9th. "The Birth of the Saviour" was the theme considered. President Waldo L. Osmond and Elders Rulon W. Stevenson, David W. Sutton and Vilace L. Radmall were the speakers.

Of the Skelton Branch, Newcastle District, on October 2nd. "The Articles of Faith" was the theme of the morning session. District President Orson H. Berrett and Elders Vard W. Meadows and Amos B. Robinson delivered discourses.

Of the West Hartlepool Branch, Newcastle District, on October 9th. "The Articles of Faith" was the theme developed by the Sunday School children. President Orson H. Berrett and Elders James O. Hawkins, Vard W. Meadows and Amos B. Robinson were the speakers.

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**Doings in the Districts:** *Birmingham*—Six persons were baptized and confirmed members of the Church at services held in the chapel at Handsworth on October 1st, 2nd, 8th and 10th, respectively. The ordinances were administered by President Heber J. Matkin and Elders Kenneth H. Smith, Rulon F. Thompson, Ezra M. Parry, Laurence Peterson, Grant W. Wilde and Merrill Sandberg.

*Hull*—A Harvest Festival was held in the Gainsboro Branch on October 3rd. A goodly number of friends were present and enjoyed the spirit of the occasion with the members. On October

6th social entertainments were held throughout the branches of the District, marking the beginning of a new year's work in the Mutual Improvement Associations.

*Liverpool*—A missionary meeting was held at Blackburn on October 1st, under the direction of President David M. Kennedy. Encouraging reports were given regarding the work of the preceding month. M. I. A. socials were held during the first week of October in the several branches of the District, preparatory to beginning the new work outlined for the year. To stimulate interest a banner in green and gold with the permanent M. I. A. slogan affixed will be given to the Association showing the greatest activity and efficiency.

*Manchester*—At a service held in the chapel at Manchester, on October 8th, one person was baptized by Elder Henry R. Price, and confirmed by President Kenneth A. Nielson.

*Newcastle*—The Traveling Elders convened in a missionary meeting at Sunderland on October 1st. It was there reported that a large number of men had been reached as a result of evening tracting. Interesting experiences pertaining to work in the country sections were related.

*Nottingham*—The opening of the M. I. A. season was featured by a combined meeting of officers and teachers, and a District social, held in the hall at Nottingham on October 10th. Suggestions and instructions were given by President Waldo L. Osmond. A large M. I. A. banner, with suitable inscription, has been purchased, to stimulate interest by competition among the branches.

*Sheffield*—A meeting of the missionaries of the District convened at Barnsley on October 1st. Favourable reports were given and plans formulated for the coming month. At a service held in Sheffield, on October 6th, two persons were baptized by Elder Fred L. Finlinson, and confirmed by Elders Merlan G. Wood and Thomas E. Paskins.

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LIVERPOOL

FOR SALE IN ALL THE DISTRICTS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN GREAT BRITAIN.